

Christian Education for the Indian.

Santee Normal Training School, Nebraska.



American Missionary Association.

Fourth Ave. and Twenty-second St. New York

Christian Education for the Indian.

BY MISS E. J. KENNEDY,

Santee Normal Training School, Neb.

Many people are now saying, "What need is there for mission schools among the Indians? We hear of so much being done by the Government for them. Why, there are 113 boarding-schools, with accommodations for 16,000 pupils, besides many small day schools, in the villages and camps throughout the Indian country." Yes, it is well known that the Government has taken a very active interest in the welfare of the Indian for some years. The Indians have been located upon reservations and fed and clothed. In many places they have been granted land in severalty; houses have been built for them, and they have been provided with teams, wagons, plows, tools, and all the necessary implements for cultivating their fields. Their children have been cared for and taught in the Government school at great expense, and some progress has been made towards civilizing these people. But what is the condition to-day of the great mass of the race? Still on the reservations, still being fed; many of the children are being educated, and money is being paid to them in large sums. They are still dependent upon the Government for existence. United States Indian Commissioner Hon. William A. Jones says: "The Indian is little, if any, nearer the goal

of independence than he was thirty years ago, and if the present policy is continued, he will get little, if any, nearer in thirty years to come." And our U. S. Board of Indian Commissioners, in their last annual report, urged that the whole system of guardianship which has been exercised by the Government for so long over the Indians should come to an end, and they should be put upon an equal footing with other citizens, so far as their relations with the Government are concerned. In the Government schools a secular education only is aimed at. Its schools send out no leaders trained for Christian work. The ideals set before their pupils are entirely along the lines of self-support and morality, which is very good, so far as it goes; but it does not meet the need of the Indian, born a savage, and raised in an atmosphere of superstition and ignorance—an utterly selfish being, with no conception of the home-life, and cherishing a hearty hatred for all whom he counts his enemies.

Now, to change his customs, dress and manner of gaining a living, does not bring about the desired change in the man. Since this plan does not fully meet our ideal of the duty which Christian America owes to the Indian, from some other source then must come the revelation of God's saving love that will satisfy his heart-hunger and give him the knowledge of Christ as his Saviour and the Word of God as the true standard of Christian conduct and purity of life. Surely, then, the whole work of Christianizing and fitting the Indians for the duties and responsibilities of Christian citizenship are laid upon the churches. I think it is an acknowledged fact that in all heathen lands the trained native missionary is of much more value in the work than the white mission-

ary. So we find that in China, India, Turkey and Africa there are Christian schools in which students are being fitted for the work of Bible women, nurses, teachers, doctors and missionaries.

And with all our splendid public schools, colleges, state normals, universities, etc., yet each of the great denominations have their Christian colleges and seminaries in which their ministers, teachers and evangelists are specially trained for their work. Does the Church realize the *need* of the Indian and her duty and responsibility to him? It seems that she does not, for we have these last ten years been compelled to cut down, year after year, our expenses in the mission fields, close up work already well in hand, and faithful workers have been dropped from our rolls. Friends, if the Indian is ever educated up to citizenship and Christian manhood and made a self-supporting, self-respecting brother in Christ—a fellow-laborer in uplifting his race—it must be done by just such work as the American Missionary Association is doing through its schools and missionaries by your contributions. During the administration of the late President Harrison, President Roosevelt, who was then a subordinate, was commissioned to inspect all the Indian agencies. In referring recently to this experience, he said that he had not travelled far over the reservations before he discovered that the greatest of all forces for uplifting the Indian and transforming him into a Christian citizen was the missionary. There is not space to tell of the beginning and growth of the American Missionary Association's school-work among the Dakota or Sioux Indians, so I will speak only of its present conditions. The central mission stations and schools are at Fort Berthold, N. D.; Oahe, S. D.;

and Santee, Neb. Each of these schools is now limited to a little more than one-half its capacity of work. The oldest and largest of these schools is the Santee Normal Training School, which was begun in 1870 in a two-roomed log-cabin, and now has the appearance of quite a little village.

This year we have had ninety-three boarding pupils in our school, varying in ages from seven to twenty-seven, and in grades from first primary through high school.

Half of the day is given to industrial work, and all have instruction in the care of their own rooms and the house. The girls have lessons also in cooking and sewing, which they enjoy very much. In the cooking classes each one is given a blank book, in which she copies all the recipes given, and the results of every experiment made by the class. During the vacations these school girls have opportunity in their homes to put into practice what they have learned, and to prove to their people the benefits of cooking lessons, besides introducing many desirable changes in their homes. Most of the young women are eager to learn to cut and make their own clothing, and also to make children's garments. I once had charge of a children's missionary society of boys and girls from six to twelve years of age, and in one year each child made two or more little garments which were sold to their parents for the baby or little brothers and sisters at home, and the money went into their missionary box and was sent to Kalgan, China. The boys have lessons in farming, caring for stock, printing, carpentry and blacksmithing. Some of our former pupils are now working in Government shops at different agencies: All our teaching is made as simple and practical as possible, so that they may use their

knowledge in the more limited surroundings of their own homes. In the printing-office there are two school-papers printed, one in the Dakota language and the other in the English. There are also Sunday-school lesson leaflets printed in the Dakota language, and other matter for school and general mission use. Books are rebound, and papers and magazines are bound for school and library use. All the presswork, typesetting, binding, and first proof-reading are done by the boys, under the direction of their instructor.

In connection with our Santee school, there is a Bible Correspondence School, with a membership of about one hundred and twenty. Many of these students are former Santee pupils, some are native missionaries or pastors, or Y. M. C. A. leaders, and the rest are the more progressive Indian young men and a few of the younger women who are studying. The object of this correspondence class is to help the native pastors and teachers, and all who will study at home. Another feature of school work is the lantern lectures given by Mr. F. B. Riggs, not for this school alone, but for all who will attend, and these lectures are always well attended both at Santee and when he makes his tours up through the Indian country. He travelled five hundred miles by wagon, giving lectures in various mission stations and school buildings. There is a Y. M. C. A. at Santee, which is mostly composed of the young men in our mission school. We have an active Endeavor Society that has for several years been helping to support a missionary in Turkey.

The Mothers' Christian Endeavor Society is just ten years old now. It meets once a month with one of the school matrons, and its influence is being felt more every year in the Indian homes.

Among the girls in the Dakota Home there is a missionary society of twelve members who have pledged eight dollars for missions during this year, and they have already paid five dollars on their pledge.

They earn their money by making bead belts, watch-chains, and other articles of Indian fancy work in their leisure time. They are very enthusiastic in both their work and study.

The Alunini of Santee Normal Training School have for several years been helping to support a student here, which shows their appreciation of what the school has done for them.

I might name a long list of former pupils of our school who are leading quiet, busy lives in their homes. They are respected by all who know them, and to these young men and women the older people come with their questions, doubts, and difficulties. They are the leaders in church work, and in politics; as the young men vote so do the older men. To-day we find that those who are foremost in every advance towards the development of Christian civilization are former pupils of the mission schools. As we watch the growth and development of these pupils after they have been with us a few years, and consider the homes from which some of them come, we wonder at the transforming power of Christian education.

Among the Dakota or Sioux Indians there are about 2,500 members of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches scattered all over the northwest. In the early years these Christian Indians were content to meet anywhere. But now there is a growing desire for a church, and in the past few years the people have worked eagerly for church buildings

until now the Indian country is marked here and there with little churches which are largely the results of their own labors. Gradually they are coming also to take up the duty of pastoral support. The Indian members of these two churches have together formed a society for the extension of work among their own people, called the Dakota Native Missionary Society. In most of the churches there are women's sewing circles which have a faculty for raising money that is truly wonderful. The Indians are liberal, and ready to divide their good things with their neighbors. The Dakota Native Society has for several years supported a Dakota Indian missionary whom they sent to the Crow Indians, their old-time enemies. During the twenty-five years between 1876 and 1894 the sum total raised by these native Christians for Indian missions was \$17,652, and during the past eight years they have given for the work among their own people nearly \$20,000 besides quite a nice little sum for foreign missions. Last year the Indian women of Pilgrim Church at Santee gave \$10 for the work among the colored people at Tougaloo, Miss., and \$5 for foreign missions besides what they gave through the regular church contributions. It is above all the influence of Christian missions and Christian education that is changing the Indian ideals of life from those of roving savages and pauper dependents, to a willing attitude towards self-support and creative industries. The great need of the Indians of every tribe is trained Christian leaders from among their own people, but above all they must have a firm faith in Christ as their personal Saviour, and a true realization that He alone can give to their people all that we desire for them.